OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK AND HOW TO DO IT

BLACKALL

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Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
presented by

JAMES P. BLACKLEDGE

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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JAS. P. BLACKLEDGE,

OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK

AND

HOW TO DO IT

A Manual for Baptist Sunday-school Workers

BY

C. R. BLACKALL

OUR IDEAL

A HOME SCHOOL AND MISSIONS FOR EVERY BAPTIST CHURCH
EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SERVICE
EVERY MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL IN THE CHURCH SERVICE
ALL AND ALWAYS FOR JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD AND KING

PHILADELPHIA

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A FOREWORD

THE original manuscript of this work was written on railroad trains many years ago, during a period of intense activity in educating, transforming, and organizing Baptist Sunday-school work in the great West, while engaged as district and Sunday-school secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society. The book must have struck a chord of popular sympathy and interest because it met instant and continuous demand, edition rapidly succeeding edition. Three times, at intervals of several years each, it was revised and more or less recast, to keep it in pace with changed conditions.

Since its last revision the advance in Sunday-school methods has been greater than during the whole preceding period, yet nothing has seemed to fill its place, and the frequent inquiry for it of late has met answer that it was "out of print." For the fourth time it has now been revised, and in large part rewritten, with considerable enlargement both in scope and size of page. Occasional seeming repetitions occur, but they are intentional, with a view to special emphasis on certain points presented in differing relations.

It has been prepared from a Baptist point of view, but its principles are applicable to the schools and churches of any denomination. It deals with fundamentals, and necessarily leaves much to be studied and worked out in personal experience by the aid of other and larger works that are available, a list of which is given upon another page.

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While no claim to distinct originality is made, its grouping and restatement of principles may be acceptable to the new class of readers now likely to use the book as a manual of information and help.

While its standard is high, it is not beyond that which can be attained through honest and conscientious effort by those who think it worth while to do their best for the Master. It presents a lofty ideal, the elements of which are derived from the best features of various schools that rank high in the Sunday-school scale, every such feature being entirely practical and capable of adoption, subject only to the peculiar limitations or environment of any given school.

It must not be forgotten that results are from God, who often honors and even transforms feeble effort on our part. Our work should be done in humble dependence upon God alone, yet it is equally true and essential that we must at all times work as though everything depended wholly upon ourselves, the Holy Spirit influencing and directing. Thus the two conditions of success meet in him.

It is not probable that I shall ever be called upon to make another revision of this manual. In its new form, as in previous editions, I send it forth with earnest desire and prayer that it may prove an inspiration and true helper to my fellow-workers in the truth.

C. R. BLACKALL.

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OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK

I

OUR WORK

THE WORK DEFINED

WORK in any direction is valuable only in so far as it produces a fruitage of good. Success in a given work is gained only by adaptation of means to the ends proposed, with thorough and persistent use of such means until the end is accomplished.

Christianity is the religion of "The Book," which book we rightly hold to be God's message of salvation to a sinful world, and the only safe guide to human conduct. Those who love the Book and obey its divine counsels will naturally desire to make it known to others who may be ignorant or indifferent or careless.

In every department of our work certain requirements are prominent as being essential to any fair measure of success ; they are fundamental. To ignore any one of them is to invite failure. To act in disregard of them is to be guilty of folly. Strict obedience to them is not only a stern duty but a high privilege. Attainment of what is required is entirely within the possibilities of any one who would be faithful to a sacred trust as a servant of the Most High.

Knowledge of the Book. Without such knowledge how can one instruct others? Men have made this a much more difficult matter than is necessary. The great facts

and truths of the Bible are within the comprehension of a child ; if it were not so, there were little chance of salvation for children. The Book is its own best illustrator. "He who runs may read." It is "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Therefore, "I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways ; I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy words."

Knowledge of the Land. Without violence the Book cannot be separated from the Land where it had birth ; the one throws light upon the other. The facilities for learning the Land are equal to those for learning the Book. Its geographical features, its peoples with their sometimes strange manners and customs, its unique history, may all be comprehended by any one of at least average capacity. Without such attainment there may be obscurity at times when clearness is easily at command. One who would understand the Book aright must positively understand much that pertains to the Land. Where abundance of food is provided one is not justified in starving.

Knowledge of the Pupils. No amount of knowledge of the Book and of the Land will avail if due attention is not paid to the pupils who are to be taught. This applies to teaching from the desk equally with teaching in the class. Knowledge of them in their homes, their school, their places of employment, their amusements, their habits of life, their tendencies, all must come within our purview. It may seem a task, but the task must be mastered if our work is not to be done at random and therefore done imperfectly.

Knowledge of Best Methods. The best work can best be done by using the best means. We are provided with the best of implements and must learn how to use them. Such knowledge does not come intuitively ; it must be sought and delved for patiently. One needs something more

effective than a penknife to win precious ore from the deep recesses of the mine. There is no excuse for ignorance and inefficiency when the largess is so abounding. Of course there is involved some cost of time and effort, perhaps money also, but the returns will be abundant.

Wisdom in the Application of Knowledge. Wisdom is simply the right use of knowledge. Knowledge without wisdom will not by one particle better the world : wisdom in the application of knowledge, first to one's self, then to pupils ; wisdom in the gaining of intellectual, moral, and spiritual capital, which will be available in every teaching hour and especially in every emergency. While the Divine aid is constantly sought, its impress will be especially powerful at this point. One cannot possibly succeed without it. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou . . . find the knowledge of God." "Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her and she shall promote thee ; she shall bring thee to honor."

DISTINCT AIMS OF THE WORK.

He who shoots at random into the air will most probably accomplish nothing except to lose his arrow. Aims in our work should be definite, clearly understood, and consistently followed. They are three-fold, and have often been rehearsed, yet repetition seems necessary, "line upon line and precept upon precept."

Instruction. Naturally this comes first in order. The untaught soul may not find Christ, may not even know that there is a Christ through whom salvation is provided, except as God may use us as his agents in imparting knowledge by means of the written word and the human voice. Not that

God cannot do without our poor service, but this appears to be his method and thus he bestows honor upon us. And he expects us to do his work well and thoroughly. Happy shall we indeed be if our pupils are led by us to accept and profit by the words of wisdom : "Take fast hold upon instruction ; let her not go ; keep her ; for she is thy life."

Conversion. Not second, however, in importance, although by no means, as some appear to regard it, the only aim of the work. Conversion is change. Change cannot be wrought without effort. In the case of a human soul lost in the depths of sin, nothing can be fully accomplished without God ; but the leading of that soul to Him who alone can save may be our work, and therein is our privilege and duty. If we neglect the opportunity, God will hold us accountable. The faithful, true Sunday-school worker will scarcely fail to win souls to Jesus, because with the instruction will go forth such love as must tend irresistibly to draw them to him.

But every intelligent teacher well knows that his work is not completed when conversion has occurred. There is something beyond. They mistake who suppose that the hour of change is the end ; it is but the beginning. The newly born soul is like the babe ; beyond lies a vast unknown. Every one must be, do, and suffer as if none had preceded him. Whether he succeeds or not depends in great part upon the training received.

Culture. This is never finished during the present life. Love and faith and trust are implanted as germs in every new-born soul. Too often they are so covered by the rubbish of life that there is little chance for their development. But as the breath of God vivifies them they quickly expand, and the whole nature is changed. Now it is the teacher's work to give these such culture that the life shall become full, complete, rounded out toward the perfection which our

great Exemplar has shown us. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect." Perhaps it may be ours only to sow good seed, that others may reap a harvest from our sowing, even to an hundred-fold. Under God's blessing the harvest is sure, whether we do the reaping or not.

PHASES OF THE WORK.

Individual. It is peculiarly individual, opening in divers directions, like veins of precious ore that require only labor and skill to be brought to the surface and enrich the world. Qualities of mind and heart are as different as the opportunities and needs that God has presented to us. There is no one, rich or poor, influential or humble, learned or ignorant, that may not have some place in this work. Because you have not capacity for the post of superintendent, shall you refuse to take any other? If you are conscious that you do not possess that great requisite of the true teacher—aptness to teach—shall you fold your arms in indolence and neglect to do anything whatever in the vineyard of the Lord?

The success of our work depends upon individual effort. Failure will be the result of individual neglect or wrong management. The degree of success gained will be precisely in proportion to the individual work done. It is personal contact that enables us to understand people. It is through this personal contact that hearts are reached and won to Christ. Probably more conversions have occurred through this means than any other.

But this is not all. In the maintenance of order and in the training of a school or a class, the individual character of the work is apparent. If a superintendent is disorderly by being noisy, impatient, or irritable in manner, he communicates the evil to his school; if other officers have little or no regard for the obligations they are under, or if

teachers are listless and indifferent, it will be next to impossible for a school to flourish. Each one for himself, as officer or teacher, without regard to any one else, must see to it that the particular duties in hand are well and faithfully done. If singing is the order, every one should have a part. The example of one teacher who remains silent during the service is likely to affect the whole class ; one officer or teacher with head erect and eyes carelessly wandering during prayer may demoralize a whole school ; one gossipy, whispering pupil may cause his or her class to lose the whole review exercise, and may break the entire force of the most important and impressive truth.

Local. Whatever outlook we may take, however wide the view beyond, the first thought belongs to the immediate present. This is the individual idea applied to a particular church. A beam of light finds its reflection first upon the nearest point or object. So the influences of a school are felt first upon the church of which it is a part.

The spiritual status of the school should frequently come before the church in an unobtrusive manner at the regular devotional or social meetings. One teacher finds a hopeful condition or a deep religious interest pervading his class ; he mentions the fact, and a definite subject for gratitude or prayer is presented ; the meeting is thereby perhaps lifted out of a rut ; attention is possibly directed to other classes or to other conditions previously unnoticed. The interest is purely a local one, thus far, and may in great part remain so. It is the individual church stirred within itself and becoming active for good.

General. These grow out of the others. We are not content that our own vessels are full. Our joy brims over and, remembering that we have much in common with other Christians, our desires are that they too may become filled. Co-operation easily follows. A neighborhood is

canvassed and every one who can be reached is offered a helping hand. This is the local idea applied to a community. But it does not rest there. Yet beyond the mind and desires reach, and a fraternal hand is stretched out to embrace the work of a State ; then State meets State, and nation meets nation, until the world is included in one circle of faith and love.

All this may be attained without sacrificing any principle of right or truth. If such sacrifice be demanded the bond is broken and Satan enters by the breach. But this general work is so essentially different in character from the individual and local, that no difficulty need occur.

Steadily carried on, the influence of a single school may be diffused over the world. The record of a single active school shows that in the course of years five foreign missionaries went forth from its midst to bear the word of life to nations in darkness. Another counts three missionaries to distant lands, besides several distinguished college professors and ministers in our own country. Many are to-day maintaining native preachers among the heathen, or colporters and Sunday-school missionaries in their own States. But you will find only church schools making such records. Would God that all were equally engaged.

RELATIONS OF THE WORK.

The Church. No school can properly exist without direct relation to some church. Any other condition is abnormal. Whether a home-school or a mission-school, it is the church at work, on the gospel plan, teaching the word of life. It bears a relation to the church as real as does the prayer meeting. It is one of the strong arms of the church ; the right hand that grasps and wields the sword of the Spirit to cut down error and slay sin. Viewed in this light, it may well be regarded as the teaching session of the

church, next only to the preaching session, in which all have a part, and from which neither youth nor age should think of graduating.

This being the case, it is obvious that the maintenance of the school should not devolve upon a few, but be the work of the church as such. Its needs ought to enter into the estimates of the year, and provision should be made for it as cheerfully as for the pastor's salary or other necessary items of expense, leaving the contributions of the school, in the main, free for missionary purposes along the same lines and at the same times as are adopted by the church.

The Pastor. With a clear perception of the true relation of the school to the church, there is no difficulty in determining the pastor's relation to this work. The school being the child of the church, or a working arm of the church, the pastor of the church is its pastor. He may not care to have any special work assigned him, but nothing can affect his relation as pastor. As such he is in and of the school, not by privilege or courtesy, but by right ; to guide, if need be, to learn the condition of that portion of his workers, and to be in such perfect sympathy and accord with them that friction or difficulty would be impossible. At the same time, no wise pastor would rudely interfere with those to whom had been committed the care and management of this department of the church work. If radical evils exist, he will wisely seek a remedy, not through revolution, which is always distasteful and painful, but by the firm yet kind pressure of persuasion, remembering that great results are the work of time, patience, diligence, and faith.

The Unconverted. Here a wide field is opened. Gathered at a kingly feast where are safety, light, joy, abundance, the heart goes out to those who are perishing in the world's dark night, and starving on the husks of sin. We would draw them into paths where we delight to walk. Often

they hear us and come at our call. But the light that illumines us shows our defects. Christ in our heart and life may win them. But selfishness, vanity, and pride may lead them to view our religion as a mockery and a sham, and to regard themselves as better without it.

If honest and true ourselves, we have a right to expect that the unconverted will yield to the claims of Christ. If careless in life and cold at heart, we may expect that practical infidelity will grow up in the hearts of those about us. Whether we choose it or not, our observers are taking lessons from us, and will be influenced in their decisions not so much by our words as by our actions.

Professing Christians. The field here also is wide. The opportunity of rounding out the Christian character of pupils is one that should not be despised or neglected. If faithful, the influence of your work will tell in all the after years. You are shaping the destiny of some of those under your care ; see to it that they are rightly developed, and thus qualified for the responsibilities that will certainly appear in the after years, when they will be grateful to God and to you for your patient and helpful ministry.

Mixed Teaching. Two related questions arise at this point, one of which is whether persons of other denominations should be employed regularly as teachers in a Baptist Sunday-school. The answer is self-evident in the light of other propositions maintained in this manual and with the suggestions of ordinary good sense. One purpose of the school being to educate in Baptist principles for the more thorough establishing of the church, it must be clear at a glance that those who hold differing views should not be asked to work in that relation. And this is not in the slightest degree an unkind or unfraternal reflection upon those of other denominations, however cordial toward them may be our feelings of Christian fellowship.

The second question is, whether pupils should be encouraged to attend schools of other denominations, in addition to their own school. The answer is not difficult to find, if the schools are such in fact and not merely in name. If the work in each is the mere rehearsing of a few mild platitudes and the indulgence in a few simple and pointless exhortations, when those who utter them have not the faintest expectation that they will be accepted and adopted, it may not be of special moment whether pupils attend the schools of differing denominations.

But if the teaching in each is equally true to the tenets of the church to which it belongs, the inevitable consequence will be a confusion of ideas in the minds of pupils, resulting in uncertainty and doubt upon important questions of doctrine and practice, and therefore a positive injury. This may at first seem a narrow view, but it is correct, because young minds are undisciplined and incapable of weighing evidence ; hence the strong and emphatic presentation of widely differing and conflicting views leads often to rejection of both, or weakening of judgment upon questions likely injuriously to affect the whole after life.

Added to this is an unconscious influence, often very subtle, which may and probably will be exerted in molding the character and life of pupils, one effect of which will be to produce religious tramps rather than strong, thinking, and vigorous Christians ; men and women who will be content to remain the careless recipients of the bounty of others instead of leading an independent and strenuous life.

Home Classes. The "Home Department" of the Sunday-school aims to provide for that large class of people who for various reasons are unable to attend the regular sessions. It includes shut-ins, traveling salesmen away from home, persons employed on Sundays, etc. The plan is simple and effective. No other recently established

agency has been more marked by good results. Every Sunday-school should have its Home Department and should maintain it efficiently.

PARTIES TO THE WORK.

Officials. Every movement must have competent leaders in order to become successful; mention of these will be made later. Enough merely to enumerate them as the Superintendent, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Librarians. These should be chosen by the teachers and other workers, and not by the school as a whole. The boys and girls of the school are there to be instructed and not to rule, and they should not be allowed to participate in the choice of officials or teachers; any concession in that direction will end in difficulty and failure. When the officials are selected, the approval of the church will be in order; such action should always be taken before they enter upon their duties.

Teachers. These have a work different from but not less important than that of the leaders. A constantly recurring question is, "Who shall teach?" With a clear understanding of the aims, such a question could not arise. As well ask, "Who shall preach?" Do we seek blind guides? Do we choose our pastor from the inexperienced, untrained, and unconverted? We may take the very highest type of morality and purity unstamped by the love of Christ that the world affords, and place it before a Sunday-school class; we may esteem the character as we admire the wax work that closely resembles the living flower; but in so far forth as Christ is wanting, there is no fragrance of life, and in proportion as the outward walk is blameless and beautiful it is dangerous in its association with the plastic material beneath its impress, because the practical lesson of such a life is that there is no need of Christ, that moral worth

and a blameless character before the world are sufficient. Lulled to sleep by this, some may find themselves in the presence of the Master without "the wedding garment" that alone can assure a place at the great feast. Gladly would we secure such workers in some departments, but not to place them in charge of classes until we have the assurance that the crown of their lives is love and obedience toward God as well as toward man.

Second only to a pure, abiding, and earnest devotion to Christ, a great essential of the teacher is study: beginning with self, to learn wherein weakness and sin find hiding-place, in order to their correction; making God's word a constant companion, getting light from its light, and giving back to others that which has been received; striving to understand every member of the class, in order that the lesson of the hour may always be adapted in its practical application to each one, "a word in due season"; and ready to use the knowledge gained for counsel, guidance, or restraint; desiring no higher honor than to lead the whole class into the way of eternal life; and striving to gain that aptness in imparting knowledge which is the bright mark of a true teacher, and that pure love which hesitates at no sacrifice or self-denial and spares no effort for the present or future good of any member of the class, however humble or unattractive.

Pupils. This is the most numerous class engaged in our work. From the cradle, almost, they begin to look into our faces and seek our hearts. Not more clearly and certainly does the sensitive plate within the camera receive our likeness than does the impressible heart-mold of the little child receive it; but with this difference—the picture never can be effaced. Years of toil, care, pain, and defeat alike fail to remove what we have consciously or unwittingly placed there. It is no trifling matter, therefore, to write in

the open book of the child-mind and child-heart. The cry that comes up from infancy to maturity may be expressed in four words : "Have patience with me !" First there is uncertain groping, like one with eyes but no light, in a place that is new and strange but full of possible grandeur sometime to be realized. Come to that level if you would reach the first aspirations of a very little child. It cannot bear the glory which you may enjoy, but with patience you may lead by the small white hand until it is able, possibly, to rise even to greater heights than you have attained.

Then there is youth, impatient of restraint, perhaps, and wayward in every act, trying you as never before, and setting at naught your counsels, entreaties, prayers. You cannot endure it another day, you think, and turn from the effort with harsh words upon your lips and unkind feelings in your heart, asserting that it is of "No use to try any longer," or that "The lad is past all hope of redemption !" But has Jesus served you in this manner ? Think of your own shortcomings and frequent yielding to temptation and wrong, of the patience and long-suffering of Jesus toward you, and then be ashamed that you have given up so easily ! Come to your work as undertaken not merely for the pleasure of it, but because the welfare of immortal souls is involved, and because you know not what God may yet make of those of whom you think so lightly. Cling to them with the strong and mighty arms of love that will not let them go until they have found safety in Christ. It may be death to them if you let go your hold. It may be life if you are earnest and sincere.

A thought may well come in here regarding the older ones who make a part of every school. It is well to give all due attention to the children and youth ; but there are older ones to be cared for whose lives have been wrong, or

at least devoid of correct instruction. They also may be groping in darkness, or with very dim light may be eagerly longing for more. They need your helping hand to lift them into a higher plane of Christian experience. Neglect them and an element of weakness and trouble is fostered, where might be developed strength and self-help. Care for them, and they may at least become useful as gleaners in the great harvest-field.

Parents. Nothing can rightly be counted a substitute for home teaching and training. Officials and teachers should do their utmost to bring parents into hearty sympathy with the school and obtain their co-operation in all possible ways. Each week the Sunday-school lessons should be considered in the home, and the pupils be thereby prepared for the Sunday-school class. If it is found impracticable to gain the entire home circle for the regular sessions of the school, enlist all in the Home Department classes.

UNITY OF THE WORK.

Preaching. Regarding our work as a unit, it will be evident that no disagreement should occur in its several departments. The pulpit has its specific office ; preaching is here the order. Teaching follows, if the other is true. Of course, preaching, which is another word for proclaiming or heralding the truth, is not confined to the pulpit, but occurs wherever and whenever we speak the truth of God. But here is the place where one stands particularly called of God and set apart by his brethren to present and explain the sacred word. It is a means that ranks first in order, and is not to be put aside or ignored in any degree whatever. Yet it is not the only method of divine appointment.

Teaching. Herein we should look for the reflection of pulpit work. What is taught from the sacred desk should not be questioned, slighted, or controverted in the Sunday-

school class. The latter should supplement the former. The essential agreement should be marked. It will be so if God's word is taken aright.

Books. It will not do to suppose that the preacher is alone accountable for the right indoctrination of the people, nor that even preacher and teacher together can wholly do the work. In this day everybody reads. The demand for books and papers is enormous, and thousands of presses are constantly producing mental aliment mixed with the most poisonous matter. Under an artful and specious guise the seeds of error and even vice are dropped into young hearts as yet unable to discern truth from its opposite, and, ere we are aware of it, they take deep root. We speak of the seeds of error. An outrageously bad book could not easily find place in your library ; a moderately bad book would be detected very soon, if not at once ; but one that is apparently clean and pure, with a high moral tone in the main, is apt to be accepted without much question. Yet that volume may have a single page, or sentence, or perhaps a picture, that will start doubts or suggest thoughts fatal to the peace of a young believer and destructive of all the serious impressions which a teacher or preacher has previously made. Look to it, then, you who have charge of this matter, and let no inducements lead you to place in your Sunday-school library a single book that is objectionable.

For a time the library question has been in great degree relegated to the rear, and properly so, because the spirit of commercialism swept down upon it and filled the library shelves with the veriest trash merely because it was cheap, the question of quality being overborne by that of quantity. A healthful reaction is occurring and the best grade of books more frequently now finds buyers and crowds out the rubbish of earlier days.

Periodicals and Lesson Helps. It is a day of papers and magazines as well as of books. However full the list, the ever-increasing cry is for more. Competition is close. Unfortunately there is not always due discrimination as to intrinsic value. Stinginess and covetousness sometimes join in urging that "anything will do for the Sunday-school," and "we must get the cheapest that the market affords."

For such paltry reasons some would barter truth for a few coppers, discount the spiritual life of those under their charge, and bring the Sunday-school cause into contempt. Meanwhile secular schools are being provided with the best that can be produced. Shall we never learn that the very best is not any too good to offer at God's altar? Do we forget God's requirement that our gifts to him must be without blemish?

Great progress has been made, especially within a few years, in Sunday-school lesson-helps. The steadily-increasing desire for better-graded schools has produced urgent demand for corresponding lesson material. Honest efforts to grade lesson-helps upon a single scripture selection for the whole school have not been wholly satisfactory, and determination has been widely reached that the school shall not be sacrificed for any sentiment or any particular lesson plan. Special series of lessons are now available for little beginners of six years old and under; for primary classes; for the larger grades between the latter and the seniors; and for advanced thoughtful pupils who desire a broader and more thorough study than is usually afforded by the others. Wise pastors and superintendents will see to it that the schools in their charge are provided throughout with that which will most perfectly accomplish the purpose sought, in order that the schools may properly stand for all that is implied in the name they bear.

II

HOW TO DO OUR WORK

ALL experience has proved that thorough and truly successful Sunday-school work is alone to be found within denominational lines. There is no need that we attempt to answer the question why we have so many and different denominations. Enough that they exist, though their points of agreement may be greater in number than their differences. The day of "union schools" has happily passed, and churches occupy their proper relation in the great work; compromise platforms have been abandoned; the larger and better ground of Christian unity being maintained, to the betterment of both the schools and the churches.

METHODS OF WORK.

Accommodations. Having decided that there shall be a Bible-school, the first question will naturally be, where it shall hold its sessions. If it is impossible to have a building especially adapted to the purpose of teaching, then the one room that must answer for all departments of church work should be properly arranged and appointed for the three-fold object of public worship, school sessions, and social meetings. The seating should be in short sections. Each alternate seat should be reversible, so that classes may be fairly well grouped. Windows should be arranged to furnish abundance of light. Ventilation should be regarded as essential. Screens or curtains should be at command at least to separate the departments; these should not be so arranged or used that the one audience room is marred and

rendered unattractive. Comfort, convenience, and utility should be studied at every point. Often it will be possible, by stretching the cost a little, to combine accommodations for public worship and school needs without very material detriment to either.

Membership. At once disabuse your mind of any thought that the Bible-school is designed solely for children, or indeed for any particular class of persons. A fundamental principle is that the whole church, so far as practicable, should be in the school, engaged either as officials, helpers, teachers, or pupils, attending upon the regular sessions or enrolled in the Home Class Department. Not one in the entire church-membership is too young, too old, too learned, or too ignorant to have some place among the workers in church school or the mission.

The complement of this also is fundamental ; the whole school essentially should participate in the public services of the church. Special effort should be made to bring every member of the school regularly into touch with the preaching service, and such service should always include due recognition of the junior elements of the congregation. Starting with the "Cradle Roll" for the wee ones, other departments follow ; the adult or senior will include those up to seventy years young and over, while the Home Department will register all others. The attendance at the church services would naturally then be by families, as it should be, and the school would have parents with their children ; the management of the school service being rightly adapted to all. Membership in the school should be so highly regarded that it will be sought eagerly for present and prospective benefit, morally and spiritually. This implies, of course, that the school must be so conducted as to be eminently worthy of respect, and have a practical value beyond question.

Organization. No great results need be looked for without organization in such degree as may be essential to the desired end. Organization is simply the proper grouping of forces to a given purpose. The more simple the form the better. Too little organization will lessen the force of action, while too much will impair or destroy its efficiency. Constitutions, by-laws, rules of order, and similar documents, are usually more hindrance than help, but if any are adopted, make them as brief and as simple as possible. Having chosen your leaders, leave to them the practical administration of the school. If their work is not well done, the first succeeding annual meeting at latest will afford opportunity for change. Meanwhile, as occasion may require, adopt rules and orders of procedure to meet existing conditions, with the understanding that the rules must be more or less flexible and be administered with intelligence and in a loving spirit.

Baptist Schools for Baptist Churches. There is every reason why Baptist churches should maintain Baptist Sunday-schools. It must not be forgotten that in a large sense Baptists stand alone, not accepting human tradition and influenced and governed only by principles that are clearly taught in the Bible. In the face of all difficulties that may arise, this should be sufficient to demand that our children and youth shall be taught the whole truth of God as we hold it, without a single deviation. Wherever there is a Baptist church there is capacity to maintain a Baptist Sunday-school.

No Baptist Sunday-school should be organized without direct relation to some church by which it can be fostered and sustained. A mission should be planted only where it is likely to grow into a church or to become a feeder to a church. The necessary exceptions to this rule are very rare. A Sunday-school wholly independent of any church

is an anomaly only second to that of a church without a Sunday-school. No matter how feeble the body, in point of numbers or means, every Baptist church may and should have its one school at least, because, although some pecuniary resources are necessary, great numbers are not. Better a little handful of ten, holding fast to the truth and teaching it to others, than five hundred who sell the truth for any consideration whatever.

Sunday-school Finances. The application of repeated suggestions made upon other pages will readily determine the course of action in providing for and pecuniarily maintaining the school. The church is understood to provide for the school, therefore the needs of the school should be properly presented at a given date early in the calendar year, which may be designated "The Annual Sunday-school Day." The work and value of the school should be set forth by the pastor in a ringing sermon, its pecuniary needs particularly stated, and ample provision made by specific gifts payable at once or proportionately throughout the year.

A wiser plan is for the church to include in its annual budget a definite sum for expenses of the school, and make payments by its treasurer of approved bills as may be necessary. Unfortunately, few churches have risen to that standard, hence the other method may be utilized. In either case the application of the school should be based upon a definite and itemized estimate of needs. A good school, showing satisfactory evidence of worthy results, will not fail of proper and hearty support; an inefficient and unworthy school does not deserve support of the church.

The offerings of the school should, as a rule, follow the usual regular objects of beneficence of the church, and sometimes those that are special. If a building project is in hand the school should do its part along with the church,

the object in each instance being steadily kept before the school in order to develop intelligent and liberal giving, never suggesting that the gifts made be the smallest coins of the realm. A due proportion of the offerings might be retained by the school to meet calls that are outside the usual line yet entirely suitable for the school alone to recognize. In some schools the entire offerings are retained by the treasurer until "Anniversary Day," when a part of the special service is to gather the offerings by classes and divide the amount among various objects. Probably this plan would not be best for all schools.

Whatever plan may be adopted, a careful account should be kept by the treasurer, the amount being reported by classes each Sunday. At the close of each quarter a summary by classes should be given, and at the close of the year a full statement by the treasurer after the accounts have been carefully audited and approved. There is no good reason why the most thorough business methods should not prevail in every school.

Control by the Church. What has preceded implies control of the school by the church as a natural sequence. Reports should be made regularly by the school to the church and the school-work be frequently brought to its notice. The supervision should be actual and not nominal. The church should know the work that is being done in its school and be made to realize its responsibility for providing generously for the requirements of the school. This will not be hardship, but a source of pleasure and profit to all concerned.

OFFICIALS IN THE WORK.

The Superintendent. The officials should be first-class, if possible. For the superintendent, good material can be found almost everywhere, although considerable shaping is often needed. Look for one who has made a success

of something; who has executive talent combined with kind, Christian character. Do not choose on account of wealth, social position, or out of compliment, but with direct reference to the best interests of the school. Do it intelligently and prayerfully, and lay the burden upon your choice as a part of the Great Commission not to be declined. The superintendent may be either a man or a woman, whichever may be best qualified and most available.

The superintendent is the chief executive officer of the school upon whom devolves very great responsibility. He should be allowed to select the associate superintendent in order to the attainment of perfect harmony and efficiency. He must be in advance in all that pertains to the school. The elements composing it, the teachers and taught, the Sunday lessons, the religious interest, the general wants and individual needs, are necessarily objects of interest and study. But more than this is required. Having knowledge, he must use it, not only for his own good but for that of others. If he is not naturally gifted with a practical mind and executive ability, he must work the harder to gain both, and may well remember that an uncultivated gift is never equal to a careful, painstaking acquirement; hence he may hope to get even higher than some who are naturally gifted.

The work must be lovingly done. His companions in effort must be imbued with the spirit of their leader. He dare not long be cold or careless, or his influence will lead some astray. He need not be so, for the great heart of the Master is always accessible and the precious fountain is never-failing.

The Associate Superintendent. This officer is often termed "Assistant Superintendent," but the other title is the better one. He need not be a supernumerary, even in a small school. His special duties might properly include

the reception of pupils and visitors and the classification of pupils. If there is but little of this kind of work required he should be placed in regular charge of a class, or should hold himself ready to act as a substitute teacher, as may be required. In a large school two or more associates can be employed to advantage, each having particular oversight of a certain number of classes. The superintendent will do well to give his associate opportunities to prove his capacity by occasionally changing places with him.

The Secretary and Treasurer. Women generally make good secretaries. They are more quiet and are likely to attend carefully and thoroughly to the duties of the position. It is entirely proper for the same person also to act as treasurer of the school, or another may be chosen to care for the finances. To be a good secretary, one must know how to do business without disturbing others, to learn what is to be learned and do what is to be done in a manner that will not divert a single eye or a single thought from the pending exercise, whether this be singing, reading, teaching, or review, and to do what writing pertains to the office in a correct and legible manner, as from this source mainly is to be obtained a record of whatever of history the school may make. The distribution and collection of cards, blanks, collections, envelopes, etc., should be attended to without interrupting teachers or diverting the attention of pupils. Reports to the school through the superintendent should be simple and clear and brief, yet include all necessary particulars concerning which the school may desire to be informed.

The Librarian. His charge should be Bibles, singing books, papers, etc., as well as the library. In selecting a librarian, see that he has some firmness of character ; he will need it if he is to be at all efficient and orderly. A slipshod librarian will cost the school a great deal in the course of the year through lack of due care of the books, while the school

will suffer from the evil effects of his bad example. To be a good librarian requires a retentive memory, thorough system and accuracy, and a good degree of patience. Added to this he should not only be familiar with the books in the libraries but also with the pupils. He should be a true caretaker of all the property committed to his charge. Assistants to the librarian are sometimes needed in the larger schools. In this position, also, women are found exceptionally competent and effective.

The Executive Committee. For various good reasons it is wise to constitute the officials of the school an executive committee, whose joint action upon almost any point will be almost certainly accepted by the school. This committee will form the central power in the management. The superintendent will be relieved of personal responsibility concerning certain difficult questions. The school work will be sure to move more smoothly. The danger of friction will be minimized. The gain in results will be increased many-fold.

Appointed Officers. The number of these will depend on the size and requirements of the school, and all such appointments should be made by the executive committee. A chorister, an organist, one or more ushers, assistants to the secretary and the librarian, make up the usual list. In some of the larger schools a "property clerk" is appointed to attend to and care for the music books, Bibles, and movable fixtures of the school, and see that they are distributed before the school opens, and gathered up carefully at the close of each session.

Special Committees. These may be appointed by the school, annually or as occasion may require. A permanent library committee may be found useful and effective. A social committee also may be utilized. Committees for extra occasions, like the Children's Day, Bible Day, the

Christmas festival, etc., may be suggested or appointed by the superintendent from time to time.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK.

Grades and Grading. The Sunday-school has many features and processes in common with the week-day secular school. The same principles underlie success in both. Indeed, unless these principles are practically recognized there will not be much success worth talking about.

The work of grading is beset with difficulties, but happily these are not insurmountable. The grades are certainly present in every school, whether or not blind eyes perceive them, yet few Sunday-schools are well graded. In most instances the several grades are so blended that each is not readily distinguishable. We have little difficulty with the primary grade, with its three divisions: Cradle Roll, Primary, Junior The Intermediate is closely related to the Junior, but unfortunately not always recognized as worthy of notice, being but a step beyond the Primary. In fact the primary workers have in many cases absorbed the Intermediate into the Junior. The bulk of the school forms the Advanced grade, and in this grade the gains or losses are most marked. The Senior grade may include the Normal department for the preparation of teachers.

Owing to lack of suitable accommodations, the several grades are not separated as they might and should be. When the grading is defective the remedy must be carefully applied and the classes moved upward in every case from a lower to a higher, instead of downward from a higher to a lower. It is quite as practicable to grade a small school as a large one.

Classification. There is generally more fault in this regard than in the grading, yet correct classification is absolutely essential. Classification is simply the placing of

pupils in right relation with each other for teaching in classes. It should be done with regard to age and mental capacity. One difficulty proceeds from allowing pupils to choose according to their preference, which choice is almost uniformly contrary to best educational interests.

Because some of Johnnie's friends or school-fellows are in a given class he finds his way into it without let or hindrance. He is younger than the others and below them in point of intelligence, but he insists upon being just there, and stoutly refuses to be placed anywhere else. It is so much easier to allow him to have his way than it is to oppose, that there he is permitted to remain, like a square peg in a round hole, hindering the others and obtaining but little good himself. Now Johnnie's younger brother comes, naturally desiring to be with Johnnie, and is yet more in the way, but his presence is tolerated rather than lose a name from the school roll.

What is to be done when such a mixing of material prevails? The remedy is simple and effective: Classify up, and not down. Tell Johnnie's little brother that he must go into a more juvenile class and he will rebel, just as Johnnie will if you make a similar suggestion to him. Work now upon the older members of the class; grade them up from the younger element; appeal to their growing intelligence and increased manliness; meanwhile, make Johnnie the head of another set. If you have worked your plans well, all will be satisfied and none will be lost to the school.

When a class has been made right, keep it so, setting your face like a flint against the admission of any who are not suited to it. Look sharply to this matter as one upon which in large degree hinges the success of the school. The advantages that will accrue from proper classification will be a better adapting of the teaching, a better means of

progress by the pupils, a better appreciation of the school work in general, and more intelligent direction by the superintendent. A well-graded school and well-classified pupils are not at all an impossibility ; anything less is unworthy ; without it, the best work cannot be done.

Teacher Training. Something should be done toward developing the teachers, for upon them rests the bulk of the work. Every school should have its regular teachers' meetings. If these cannot well be held at any other time, an hour immediately before either the Sunday evening service or the weekly prayer meeting will answer very well. Let the superintendent and the pastor come with their best thoughts and encourage every one else to contribute something for the general good. These meetings should not be too formal, and the social element must be regarded ; but one great object is to obtain help in study and teaching. Here may be brought special subjects of prayer ; here may be counsel relative to the interests and needs of the school. Occasional week-day meetings will be necessary for business matters, which too frequently are permitted to intrude upon the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

THE SCHOOL SESSION.

A Religious Service. It is not too much to claim that every session of the school should correspond essentially to public worship by the church. In other words, it should be a religious service, not so formal as the latter often and unfortunately is made, but joyful and hearty and soulful, a service in which young and old can participate with freedom and satisfaction.

Consider for a moment : the component parts of the school are precisely those of the large congregation ; the qualities of mind and heart are the same ; the text-book is one ; the purpose is four-fold in both : worship, instruction,

conversion, culture. Remember that the school is a creature of the church, that is, every Sunday-school has its origin either immediately or remotely from a church. It is dependent upon the church for its place of meeting, for its workers, and for its pecuniary support. Granted that some churches, as such, are at fault in all this, and their schools provide entirely for their own support, but such is an abnormal condition. A final analysis will show that as a rule the pecuniary and other support really comes from the church as represented by its most advanced members who are in the school and working with and for it.

The principle remains that the church and the school form a unit, both as to purpose and largely as to methods. The first element in every "Order of Service" is praise, in which worship has large part. It may be urged that boys and girls will not easily be led to engage in worship, but if analysis were made of almost any large congregation as compared with the average Sunday-school the element of worship would be found wanting in an equally large degree to that. This is a matter of training, and the fault that may exist will lie more with adults than with their juniors. In the singing, the prayer, and the reading, a reverent spirit may and should be cultivated in all.

The hymns should be carefully chosen, and sung with intelligence and spirit, not merely for some jingle in the music that may be pleasing, or for certain musical effects, but for the devoutness of mind that the words suggest, for the leading of the soul toward God. Hymns of the church should form some part of every Sunday-school service. The school will delight itself in this part of the programme, if even half a chance is given.

The prayer also should be devout, and not a mere rehearsing of platitudes and cant phrases. It should voice the needs of the school, tenderly, lovingly, earnestly. It

should come to the point at once, boldly seeking the throne of grace, where no honest petition is ignored or denied. And he or she who offers prayer should not in the life give the lie to the words spoken.

The opening of God's word is next in order. This will be in part from the desk, and in larger part in the class. Reading the Scripture selection is often done in a careless and perfunctory manner, with such frequent stumbling as to convey an impression of unfamiliarity, to say the least. The scripture may be read in various ways, the verses sometimes alternated between superintendent and classes or pupils. If read wholly by the pastor or the superintendent, due regard should be paid to pronunciation, expression, and emphasis. An excellent preparation for public reading is to read aloud carefully when one is alone.

Next in order comes the teaching of the lessons in the classes. No interruptions of any sort should be allowed. First make the record for the day and gather the offerings of the class. A small clip should be provided for each class ; placed upon the outer end of the pew or the outer chair, it will receive the material used for records, etc., and these can be removed by the secretary without disturbing the class.

The closing thought and the closing hymn should be intimately related to the lessons that have been taught. Visitors should not be asked to address the school unless you are sure that what they say will benefit the school. If blackboard or picture is used, the same relation should be observed, avoiding mere show in your work.

Dismissal should be in an orderly manner, as of a general congregation, thereby to train the young people to leave the house of God quietly and becomingly. Teachers should be encouraged to have a few words of friendly conversation with their pupils ere they separate.

A question might arise concerning the employment of a choir or an orchestra in the school. The answer will depend upon the character of the school and the means at command. With regard to an orchestra, there is no good reason why several musical instruments are not as much in order for the service as a single one, piano, organ, or violin. If the praise service can be improved by orchestral music let an orchestra have place. If the praise service can be enhanced by the choir, let the choir have place. Exercise good sense and judgment in deciding the question, but do not in any event or in any degree allow either choir or orchestra injuriously to affect the service of praise.

In every proper way strive to gain the confidence and affection of all, and make your school attractive and delightful, thus retaining permanently all of its members. As it becomes larger, fresh needs will arise. Do not shrink from them because the expense is thereby increased, but promptly provide for them. A good map of the Holy Land, and likewise of Bible lands, some of the excellent charts now available, more library books, additional papers for teachers and pupils, a blackboard, and other things become necessities. Study to make your school perfect, and gather as rapidly as possible all that is necessary to that end.

A Teaching Service. If the general principles enunciated herein are recognized, the teacher's work will be greatly facilitated. If it be distinctly admitted that the Sunday-school should always be regarded and honored as the teaching service of the church, the sense of responsibility will be more marked and the spiritual outcome also will be marked. It cannot be denied that comparatively few of those who occupy the position of teacher have been especially trained for the service, and by far too few have the particular gifts that are necessary. It were better if the

accommodations provided could be so improved that fewer teachers would be required and the work be done more thoroughly by those who are educationally as well as spiritually competent to teach.

A distinguished teacher of elocution has said that when one has gained a perfectly clear impression of a recitation the expression of it by words and gesture will come easily and naturally. There is, first, necessity for gaining a clear, sharp, distinct, and definite impression of the truth you would teach. Your expression of it will then be given without difficulty. Impression is the teacher getting the lesson; expression is the teacher giving the lesson. Impression, again, is the result of intelligent teaching.

For profound impression there must be receptive attitude of the mind and heart toward God, there must be clear and definite perception as truth is revealed, there must be a right view of facts, for upon the facts we build the truths. You must make the revealed word your own, getting its life into you. You must apply its teachings first to yourself in order that you may be prepared to apply them to others.

Then there must be an orderly yet flexible plan, so that you are master of your subject and master of a method of presenting it to your class, and master also in drawing from the class all that will aid to make the impression upon them complete. Pictorial illustrations and special objects should be used sparingly in teaching, lest by them you produce distraction of the mind rather than illumination. Your applications may be sharp and personal. They should come as the lesson progresses and not be used as addenda at the close. Be careful in this and always discriminating.

Be faithful in dealing with the truth. Withhold nothing of that which, in the sight of God and as his messenger it is your sacred duty to teach. Do not fail to be much in

prayer: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Be very tender and loving, avoiding cant phrases, and avoid shamming as you would the Evil One himself. So will your work be well accomplished. You may be privileged to lead to Christ some who will become great soul-winners. A distinguished minister has said: "I have in mind a missionary of wide repute, a minister of international reputation, and an evangelist of world-wide fame, all led to Christ as boys in the Sunday-school, the teacher being used of God to reach them. The missionary has made continents glow with the glory of God, the minister has led multitudes to a better Christian experience, the evangelist has led tens of thousands to the Master."

Reviews. A review is "a going over a lesson or a subject again to fix it in the memory." In order to a *re*-view you must have a first view. It is a calling back of what has been taught. This should be often done in classes. The desk also has its share in the review, but often the review from the desk is a new view, and this may be as well as the other.

The desk review at the close of a lesson is usually made by the superintendent or pastor, sometimes by others who may be competent. For quarterly reviews the blackboard is often found valuable, even more than at the close of a single lesson. The methods of review are varied. One special end of good teaching and impressing truth upon the mind by means of reviews is to make the truth more practical in the life, to draw souls nearer to God, to win souls for Christ. The quarterly review should in large degree be a *résumé* of the practical teaching of the twelve lessons that have preceded.

Written reviews by members of the school have proved successful in many cases. The questions for written an-

swers, as given in the Quarterlies for older pupils, will afford fine opportunity for a good quarterly review. Concert reviews are often a source of pleasure and profit. Yet another is the catechetical review, conducted by one who understands the right methods of questioning and is able to give zest to the work. If the school is kept well in hand during the quarter it can be proved as well by intelligent and sharp questions as in any other way.

Supplemental or Additional Lessons. The object of these is to furnish specific instruction concerning the Bible and its teachings, such instruction as few teachers have the time, the disposition, or the capacity to give in the period allotted to class work during the session. These lessons must be given from the desk by a competent and interested instructor, which either the pastor or the superintendent may easily become through proper and faithful effort.

Their scope is broad, including the order of the books of the Bible ; contents of the several books and the doctrines taught therein ; Bible chronology and history, the teaching of which may be aided very greatly by various charts at command ; Bible geography, including Old Testament lands and New Testament lands, with which may be woven patriarchal and Hebrew history, the words and work and life of our Lord, and early Christian history as revealed in the book of Acts ; catechism lessons, with such practical applications as may seem advisable.

These lessons should be introduced as part of the opening exercises, and the time occupied for each should not exceed eight or ten minutes. They should be given in courses of not more than ten or twelve lessons each rather than continuously. Between them and the regular lesson there should be a stirring hymn sung by the school while standing. Such courses of study are provided in several books that can be purchased at small cost.

SPECIAL EFFORTS.

After Prayer Meetings. By which is meant a short religious service immediately following the regular session of the school. No attempt should be made in this direction unless there exists a decided spiritual interest that will justify the effort. Give a cordial, loving invitation ; gather by themselves those who respond, encourage freedom of expression, win them to Christ in all suitable ways without appealing to mere emotion.

Decision Day. Sometimes a special Sunday is particularly named and efforts are made to lead to a decision for Christ at that time. Everything in the exercises for that day is made especially evangelistic in character, and there is apt to be an unusual intensity manifested. Promise or covenant cards are provided, to be signed by inquirers. Perhaps the lesson for the day may give place to prayer and exhortation. Such work has been greatly blessed, but it would be better to make every Sunday a "Decision Day."

Children's Meetings. These differ essentially from the after prayer meeting. They are primarily designed for culture and training in lines that cannot well be maintained in the regular session, yet they may and should be in large degree evangelistic, awakening the children to a sense of need of Christ, and showing them the path of true happiness in obedience to Christ. It is also a means of linking children to the church and training them for the church to enlist heart and mind and voice and soul in active service for Christ.

It is not necessary that these meetings shall be held every week or every month, yet conditions may be such that they are frequently available. The best time for them may be on Friday afternoon, following the day school

session, when children are most easily gathered. Do not plan for a continuous series, but limit the meetings to a few weeks, extending the time as the interest may warrant. Keep them up as *children's* meetings. Encourage speech and prayer by those who are Christians; win others by loving words and ways to give themselves to Christ. The service should be conversational in form, well adapted to children, marked by brevity and variety in plan, and not more than one hour at most in duration.

MISSIONARY WORK.

Training for Giving. Without regard to this there would be little hope for the future. Anything that contemplates the mere present is necessarily selfish and narrowing in its effect. As children live in the present, knowing little and caring less for the future, there is need of education and training to fit them for right action at maturity. They especially require to be taught the value of *giving*. Not only that giving aids others, but that without it there cannot be growth in Christian character, nor even a true development of the moral nature.

Some have been accustomed to employ the contributions of the school in obtaining supplies of papers, books, etc., for its own use, but this is not missionary work. The pupils should be trained to give, as the Lord said, "hoping for nothing again." It should be the aim in the Sunday-school to train up the young to follow the Lord's instructions. Had our schools been started with the right ideas and maintained in them, we should to-day find such fixed principles of giving established that our Lord's treasury would always be abundantly furnished.

Methods of Giving. Many schools divide the regular offerings into several equal parts, and give one to our Baptist Publication Society, one to Foreign Missions, one to

Home Missions, and one or more to other objects, reserving but one part for strictly local or school purposes. Let this plan be carried out generally, and "the children's fund" will form no inconsiderable portion of our missionary receipts. But other great results are sure to follow. A deep and permanent interest will be created, far-reaching as life itself, in some cases leading to present missionary effort, in others to complete devotion of life and means to the welfare of souls.

Have a definite plan for the contributions of the year, and adhere to it. While one object is before the school, keep others out; give the pupils from time to time such information as will lead to a fair conception of the object for which their offerings are made. Be very clear, definite, and exact in what you say about it. If it is for a missionary field, then use maps to point out just where it is and convey distinct information about it. Encourage each and every one to have a part, however small, in the contribution or offering.

Special Days. During many years, several special days have been observed by Baptist schools and churches. One of these is "Children's Day," on the second Sunday in June, when offerings are made for the general Sunday-school work of our Baptist Publication Society. The other is "Bible Day," on the second Sunday in November, when offerings are made for the world-wide Bible work of American Baptists, through our Publication Society. Similar efforts are made in the Southern States in behalf of the Sunday-school Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. "Chapel Day" in behalf of home missions is observed in April.

The Broader Life. Every one can be taught that a true life consists in being useful. Giving of money is not our only privilege. Work awaits every individual—work for the

temporal and spiritual good of others. It is everywhere abundant, sometimes overwhelming. Learn to estimate it aright. Long-continued and patient teaching may be necessary before the pupils are caused to understand that to follow Christ is to go about, as he did, doing good. They will learn the more quickly and thoroughly if they see that the superintendent and teachers are constantly trying to win souls to Jesus, and to do good in every way that is possible. As a rule, you do not need a special society formed to do all this. It is better for your school, as such, to include every necessary measure, both for the development of the gift of giving and of a spirit of earnest endeavor among those within reach.

CO-OPERATION IN THE WORK.

Local and General. We are often asked : "To what extent should we, as Baptists, co-operate with others who differ from us?" It may be answered : To every possible extent that does not involve the sacrifice of principle. In Sunday-school institutes ; in county, State, national, or international conventions ; in missionary canvassing of a district, town, or city ; and in all true efforts for arousing interest, we should take active part, in every practicable manner, but not to the detriment of our more appropriate work. The right order is, first our own family and its interests, then those that may lie beyond, and the truth without division always.

RESULTS OF THE WORK.

The Sunday-school worker should never for one moment give way to despondency, for eternity will show that our work has not been in vain. We are to sow beside all waters, and trust the Lord of the harvest. He permits us to reap much in the present, gathering where we have sown, and he will see that no honest, earnest effort of even the hum-

blest of his servants shall lose at length its full reward. There are immediate results which may be briefly considered, some of which the teacher himself will probably recognize, while others will be recognized by his Christian brethren.

Growth. This is a natural result of faithful effort. A proper use of means leads to development. Sunday-school workers cannot fail to grow in knowledge and grace. Personal contact with others sharpens the understanding and warms the heart, and a deep interest in those whom we teach expands the best parts of our nature. Growth is not confined to the individual, however. Increased numbers in the church attest the power of an earnest band of Sunday-school workers ; and greater devotion in heart and life among the members generally is a noticeable effect. In any church that has had no Sunday-school, let a few begin in the name of the Lord and in reliance on the help of the Holy Spirit in this cause and it will be the opening of a new era, an earnest of better things. Glorious results will surely follow. These are not always immediate. They may come gently, imperceptibly at times, and be realized only as you compare to-day with a year ago. Look for them ; expect them ; work for them ; be assured that they will not materially fail you.

Improvement. Every Sunday-school worker has much to learn when he first begins his work. Every Sunday-school, at its commencement, should look for progress in the future. As in the case of every Christian, so in the case of the teacher and the school, if there is life, there will of necessity be growth. With a true growth there will be improvement. This will be perceptible in the superintendent and other officers and in the teachers and in all departments of the school. There will constantly be the adopting of more practical methods. With clearer appre-

ciation of the ends there will be better adaptation of correct means. The old wooden plow that only scratched the soil will be put aside for the sharp steel plowshare of thought that cuts a deep furrow, turns the rich mould of the heart up to the sunlight of truth, and prepares it for a glorious fruitfulness.

Power. With growth and improvement comes increased power. With increased power comes a larger capacity for usefulness. The churches gain ; for they have stronger workmen, stouter warriors. The enlarged and firmly knit muscle sends the heaviest blow. The strongholds of error and sin require vigorous and well-directed assaults to complete their overthrow. The day that is coming bids fair to demand more than puny weaklings in the churches of Christ for the work and the conflict before them. Every element of power in the individual member and in the church should therefore be carefully utilized.

All these results are manifest, not only in the individual and the church, but in the denomination at large. As a denomination, Baptists have been led forward steadily and rapidly, through the good favor of God. But our progress hitherto, though cause for thankfulness, should not make us content with what we have already attained. We should determine to make greater progress. Correctly and fully using the agencies that God has afforded, we may look for a condition and standing as far in advance of the present as the present is in advance of the past. Let us pray for it, and work for it—head, heart, hands, life so devoted to it that the full measure of success shall be gained here, and the crown triumphant in the great hereafter.

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